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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 000272

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E-JWIEGERT, OES/PCI LSPERLING, MGERDIN,  
OES/EGC AVOCKERODT, S/SECC RCASTENBERG

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SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA AND CLIMATE CHANGE, POST AU SUMMIT

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SUMMARY  
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11. (U) The Regional Environment Officer (REO) for eastern Africa met with Dessalegne Mesfin, Deputy Director General of the Ethiopian Environment Protection Agency on February 9, 2010 to discuss climate change decisions taken at the 14th African Union (AU) Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Mesfin provided a readout of Ethiopia Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's report to the Summit and gave an update on Ethiopia's latest climate change-related activities. REO took the opportunity to deliver talking points on President Barak Obama's fiscal year 2011 budget request to Congress on Global Climate Change (GCC). End Summary.

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MELES REPORTS TO AU SUMMIT  
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12. (U) The 14th AU Summit took place January 31-February 2 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Given his role of Head of the African Delegation in Copenhagen, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles Zenawi presented a report to the Summit on February 1 regarding the Copenhagen Climate Conference. African leaders expressed their appreciation to Meles for his outstanding contribution to safeguard and maximize the benefits and interests of Africa, acknowledging that he had faced tough challenges negotiating with many stakeholders. Mesfin confirmed these reports, pointing out that unifying an Africa-wide position is a success in itself. Mesfin noted that Meles is both excited and enthusiastic to have the opportunity to continue in his role as chief climate change negotiator for the African continent.

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MELES RE-ELECTED AS CHIEF NEGOTIATOR  
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¶3. (U) Mesfin confirmed press reports that Meles was re-elected to represent Africa as chief negotiator in the next climate change conference in Mexico in 2010 and South Africa in 2012. Mesfin informed REO that Dr. Tewolde-Berhan Gebre-egziabheir, Director of Ethiopia's Environmental Protection Agency (EEPA), will be Meles' focal point within Ethiopia on all climate change-related matters. Dr. Tewolde will lead an interagency coordination process that will include Ethiopia's meteorological agency and its water, energy, and agriculture ministries, with the EPA acting as the head agency. Mesfin also described an environmental council that will serve as an organizational tool to ensure coordination on environment and climate change issues. According to Mesfin, the membership mechanism will be chaired by Meles and will include regional presidents, local environment NGOs headed by the Forum for Environment, and private sector members. It will be a forum for discussion and will provide guidance, supervision, and call for corrective action. REO will continue to report on this council as it evolves.

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OTHER AU SUMMIT DECISIONS  
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¶4. (U) The Summit also endorsed the Copenhagen Accord, stating that each member state should report its consent individually for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). During the AU Summit, Meles proposed the establishment of a high-level panel to deal with the implementation of the Copenhagen climate summit recommendations, where the international community pledged to give billions of dollars to mitigate the impact of climate change. While holding discussions with the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, media reports say that Meles explained the panel will help mobilize funds and technical support to Africa, which many countries promised to

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extend to Africa to tackle the impact of climate change on the continent. At this point it remains unclear who is envisioned to reside on the panel.

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FY 2011 BUDGET REQUEST ON GCC  
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¶5. (U) Mesfin appreciated the information regarding President Barak Obama's fiscal year 2011 budget request on Global Climate Change, saying that he was both inspired and encouraged by the data. REO emphasized that the information reflected the President's request to Congress, not the final amount appropriated by Congress which is subject to the normal congressional approval process. Mesfin understood, pointing out that he greatly respects the U.S.' careful and methodical approach to challenges. He added that while this approach may involve front-loaded delays, the implementation phase is often fast and effective. He said he is eager to work with the U.S. on climate change issues in Ethiopia and looks forward to more information and guidance from the U.S. as our policy unfolds.

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ETHIOPIA'S CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY  
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¶6. (U) Mesfin explained that Ethiopia drafted its Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAS), which is currently registered under the Copenhagen Accord. The EPA will host a National Consultancy Workshop on March 1-2, 2010, where Ethiopia's stakeholders will review a draft Program of Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) for Ethiopia. Following the adoption of the PACC, the EPA will organize a broader consultation session that reaches out to donor and other stakeholders. With a finalized NAMAS and PACC that have broad buy-in, EPA will then begin exploring implementation strategies that can capitalize on emerging climate change financing sources and mechanisms.

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